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Letter from Sarah Whitney, Belmont,
Massachusetts, to Anne Whitney, Paris, France,
1868 July 28

Sarah Whitney

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To Basin
and Mrs. Bur
Beverly

Belmont July 28. '68

A letter sent out of the house is like the
departure of a friend, in that it excites innum-
erable regrets for the unsaid things. It is fortunate
perhaps for my correspondents & for myself that
I am not a lady of sufficient leisure to prove
by actual experiment what a deluded mor-
tal I am in supposing that only the oppor-
tunity is wanting wherein I could waste a
satisfactory letter.

Sun. AM. Aug 2. The foregoing began on
Thurs & finished this morn^g was intended
for a preface to several items ^{of} interesting
to my own mind that I hoped in their
relation to forget all past shortcomings &
misapprehension - but - they have all vanished
in thin air - & here I am on this hot morn^g
wh. is so clean & clear & beautiful that it ought
to banish all dog day feelings & remembrances
from our bodies & minds. "I have not been
conscious of an eye" said I to myself a few
minutes ago "this day". That is felicity enough
to warrant the dropping of the remaining I.
wh. I will try to do. The day also finds Mother
in better health apparently than she has been
in for some time. I took her to Dr. Scates on
Thurs. & he was so sure that his little old help
the dyspeptic troubles that take such
multiform shapes, we both came home
quite encouraged & she has been improving
ever since. Father is in his usual good con-

dition. Susan & Katy & the friends at the other
house with. There is a talk of a flitting this week.
At least Edward might before last revealed to me
two projects - one to take me to Niagara, Mon-
real &c - the other to take a larger party including
Carrie, Louise & Kate Howard & me to Danforth &
thence in open wagon with Mary & ^{her} boarding house
friends round the mountains. Either plan is very
pretty upon paper, & the latter I trust will be carried
out in part. If I shd go, I shall have to say
no again to Mrs Twitshell who has renewed her
invitation for me to go to Keene this month. The
Lesters have been there, but have left for a few
weeks, Mr L. hoping by change of air to improve
his health. They Keeneites are very much
delighted with Mrs L. finding her one of the
most interesting & lovely persons they have ever seen.
I shd prefer to make my visit while she was
in town wh. may not be, as when she comes
back, Mrs J. & Mary are going off to Cincinnati.
Since James told me that E. Bridges was
spending a week in Salem, I have been hoping
she wd make her appearance in Belmont -
So grieved am I for any word from over the water
I have to put out feelers in all directions.
There is a special - perhaps supernatural
desire to hear from Mary since the 15th of July
when Mrs Weiss said to the Robbins, "I have had
such a ^{strange} sense of her presence in my room to day
as to make me weep" & her husband replied
"how singular - I had the same impression
coming from Cambridge in the horse car." He

believed that she was writing to them. This week
ought to bring the letter - May it come my beloved
with that other assurance of well being our hearts
wait for in the sense a great distance as well as
loneness.

We see by the papers that Mrs
Shannon still lives, a thorn in the family flesh
probably on whichever side of the water it may be.
Whether lawyers & courts will ever find it for
their pleasure or interest, or in their power to
put a stop to this sad notoriety of a family
jar is getting to be an interesting question to
those who care less for the result than the friends do.
Mrs. Pickney thinks the Marrys had better consult
their own comfort & keep away. I wish I cld hear
what Mr J. expects respecting them without going
to his house.

Dr Bartol has not been heard
from by any one in this vicinity of late. A
swelling of the head some time since was thought
by his physician (Dr Talbot I believe) to be favorable.
His sister is still in Europe probably. Mrs. Barnard
has been more comfortable of late, being able to
assist in very slight ways in household duties. She
has not yet walked to Mrs Lockes as she has been
promising herself to do, & adding she has wholly
renounced feeling that the illness that always
followed the shortest drive was too much for
her.

It is wonderful to see how near Mrs
Robbins recovers from her paralytic attacks - the
second, of wh. I suppose Father or Carrie told

you at the time I was laid on the shelf, leaves
no trace of mental obscuration - & the bodily
effect has nearly passed away - We cannot
but fear however that the 3^d will follow bringing
to us more sorrow. As long as she lives, it seems
likely that company will be her great resource
& panacea. She was so jolly the other day when
I happened in, I cld not resist her importunities
to stay to tea - & her daughters said that the
night ^{before} thoroughly tired out as they supposed
she had gone to bed as soon as she had drunk
her tea, but hearing the voices of visitors in the
parlor she dressed herself & came down &
staid till they departed at 9 o'clk. How unlike
our mother in whose calendar of sins much
talking ranks No. 1. If I were one of the
sinners in this line, I shd feel less heart-
iron in running away from her for a few
days - but I do fear she will miss my
quietness & perhaps need it.

Mon P.M. Aug 3^d When I entered the Fitchburg
Station at high noon, there was Edw with
the anxiously looked for letter - not 7 days
in advance of the usual time, as by my sick-
ening of time & distance it shd have been.
But two days is much to be grateful for.
& Mother is very, very happy - & I - well,
I can forget that I spent the hot morning

in the winsome city & can sit down in perfecting a severe simplicity in this chamber nearest the sun to hold a little friendly gossip with my beloved, wondering if I had best again take leave by the forelock & send off my letter tomorrow or add the 7 to the 18 which may be consumed in the travel from Belmont to Munich. I see you took of dismayed perplexity over my mathematical problems & hasten to my relation of no news. A little necessary shopping took me town & day & one of the results is a pair of blue spectacles. Whether I shall see Blue Mountains through them still remains a question. I am sure no sight can inspire more captivous delight than did the sunset last eving as seen without glasses from Edward's steps. Do you know that you have never told us how Roman sunsets compare with those at home? - an interesting question you know to us who are not willing that all the poetry of life shd be monopolized by the eastern world. I have been reading with much interest Faines book upon Italy - an interest inspired in part by your endorsement of the ~~reliability~~ ^{reliability} of the book & in part by its apparent merit. His criticism of art, I shd enjoy more had I seen the things described by my own eyes or through his. The more I read of that wonderful old world, the more

difficult it seems to me it will be to break the
bonds that hold you there. I do so want
books & leisure & eyes to keep pace with you
the disease of the eyes shows how the books
already abound. Perhaps I ought to be miserable
over the remembrance of lost opportunities,
but it wouldn't be healthy & I try to cultivate
more agreeable thoughts - & my eyes are good
for such an infinity of pleasure, I shd be
a most ungrateful sinner to complain.
I wish you & Addy old have heard Mr Dolls
expressions of delight over the photo. wh I
took to him to day. He wants to print the
picture & make his & Addy's fortune thereby.
But you who know him will not believe that
it is the filthy lure in prospect that inspired
his admiration. He called it "Moring" & asked
if it were not the name she gave it. I think
he said that he had sold 10000 of Miss
Lunt's "Future", of wh she has a fair share of
the profits. Ruth also sells well to a more
cultivated class of persons. I showed him
the picture of Ep house wh he recognized
at once & pointed out on the right & on the
left the studios of his friends. He had never
seen the picture & was glad that I brought
it to him to frame. I am so glad you
have not given up the home that has grown
to be so dear in this one. It was with
a great pang of disappointment I read

of the possible failure of Miss Merrill to
join you in next winter's house-keeping - but
I will hope that something as good will
turn up to make you feel easy in yr mind
in the retention of Clandis Castle.

Mother has just come up to say "You have
not told Annie how the Neuralgia has left
me for months & as I think never to return.
Tell her also how delighted I am to get this
letter." Yes I think her delight makes
all things brighter to her than they have been
for some time - making the weeks of freedom
from Neuralgia seem months, & inspiring her
with a new courage to meet the ailings that
will come in some form or other. If the
mail has done its duty you have ere this
learned why Manich has a reputation of
unhealthiness - & I think I see why nervous
fever may prevail where visitors are so
toned up by the bracing atmosphere -
but I can only repeat the old prayer, God
keep you every where & let my faith grow
strong in its repetition. I am sorry to
hear that Addy has rheumatism & shall be
anxious to know that she incurs no risk
by outward application of powerful remedies
that sometimes work very serious mischief.
A preparation of witch hazel wh. Mary Hindson
recommends very strongly I shd have used

some two months since when my knee was quite troublesome if I could have procured any ~~one~~ in this vicinity. When told by an apothecary that I should probably find it only at a Botanic Drug store, I feared it was a spiritistic remedy & made no further effort for it. But Katie L. tells me that it is a very efficacious homeopathic remedy & I now only await the necessity, to make the external & internal use of it. Rhus in little pellets I think is now doing me good, & while I am so well I am not inclined to make any further experiments. I will try to remember the chloroform prescription & administer it when necessary. I doubt if Mother could use it with the same efficacy as you did - for her attacks are at the inconvenient times of eating or quick speaking. I think she seldom has the pain when perfectly quiet. I am very thankful you could find such relief in its use. Do you know that in the public garden in Boston there is a monumental fountain dedicated by a statue of the good Samaritan in commemoration of the discovery of the anæsthetic property of chloroform. It was given by the same Mr Lee who helped Dr Rimmer to a job - I don't know who made the fountain or how worthy it is. If Franklin's remedy should fail, (as I earnestly hope it may not) perhaps Mary's may serve, & I copy, not knowing however that Germany deals

in such diabolism as witch Hazel - Mary says
"it cures every thing - a greatly esteemed & I have
heard it is wonderful in rheumatism as I have
sometimes found it in neuralgia. Get the
leaves at the apothecary - put some in a
bottle, fill it with alcohol (about a handful
to a pint) & after it has stood a day or two
& seems pretty strong, put a tea-spoonful in a
smaller bottle to about a cup of rain water & bathe
the lame or painful spot, taking a little in
the mouth at the same time. Use it warm, w^h you
can easily do, by standing the bottle in hot water. I
think you will find it a blessing for all aches, pains,
bruises &c." As I recur to this letter of mine
to the copy for Chas's benefit I am amused,
& a little amazed at my own want of faith.
Thirty years experience of rheumatism. I think
has about convinced me that as Dr Williams
said there can be no permanent help but in a
new birth. Still I mean to put the article in
my Dispensary & no doubt shall have a chance
to test its virtue. The "Infusant" may stand
next to it. Homeopathy first.

Thurs. evng. As it is decided that I shall
start Innsworthward tomorrow with
Edwd, Carrie & Louise, I will send this
letter 4 days in advance of the due time
as I know not where we may be on the
regular mail day - A three days north
easter gives no, strange as it may seem
some hope of favorable weather.
Father, Mother & I have just returned
from W. R. where with Mrs. White & Kate

we have made a pleasant dinner party
at Katie's. The parting injunction of our
dear hostess was to send love, hot, hot, hot!
The sun has dropped down & I must
say no more but love, love, love.

7.30 a.m. A break in the clouds wh have
been pouring since day light - wind in the
old quarter but I suppose we shall start,
& congratulate ourselves that the Mercury
is not at one hundred.. The country is
lovely in its refreshment so I hope we shall
have a good time. I must write my
regrets that I cannot attend Miss
Alice Paged's wedding reception on Sat. P.M.
The groom is Capt. Schaff of the U.S. Army.

Heaven Bless you you my dear
Anne & Addy as the good bye prayer
of yr Sarah.

Aug. 7 '68.